REVIEW.

Thursday, January 29. 1713.

THE Course of Things, requires that I should speak of the Encreases which we have made in Commerce, since the War, according to my Trading *Ænigma* which I spoke of in my last, (*viz.*) *That we are the most Decreased, and the most Increased, in Trade*, &c.

Before I enter upon some of the few substantial Encreases in Trade, *for some there are*, give me leave to observe some kind of Encreases which are visible enough among us; such as, 1. Increase of Bankrupts, such an encrease of that kind was never seen in any trading Nation in the World, above 2000 Commissions of Bankrupts were taken out within the Compass of a few Months, and above 20000 Prisoners, *or rather, Poor Debtors*, have been discharged or certified for Discharge, by Vertue of the late Act; none of whose Debts are above 50 *l.* to any one Man.

It must be acknowledg'd, innumerable Frauds have been cover'd by that Act, discharging perjur'd Villains, who have gotten in without any Right, and are by no means proper Objects of it, some who have sworn themselves Prisoners, when they were not so, and got the Keepers of Goals, for Money, to Register them as Prisoners, tho' they were not Prisoners: some who have reserv'd great Sums of Money, nay, and boasted of it too; when, at the same time, they have sworn that they had given up all they had in the World to their Creditors; some who have compounded their larger Debts, or given private Satisfaction to the Creditors, to whom they ow'd larger Debts, than that Act allow'd to pass, and then sworn themselves off of all their small ones, and the like: —— Yet, tho' these Things are True, two Things must be said of that Act.

1. That Thousands of Honest, Distress'd, Industrious Trading-Men, and their Families, are set free by it, restored to their Liberty, in order to struggle again with the World, and keep their Families and Children from Beggary and Starving; whose Restraint before, tho' ruinous to them, was no real advantage to their Creditors, and a very great Injury to the Publick Stock of the Nation, which, as I have often said; is so far robb'd of a Due Encrease, as any Industrious Hand is kept from Labour, and tho' in such Acts of delivery of Prisoners, it is true, that two Evils follow, 1. The Subjects Right seems to be given away, by causing him, *whether he will or no*, to release a just Debt: And, 2. A great many Frauds are committed, and Knaves, who deserve no Pity, released; I say, *tho' this is so*, yet are such Acts not only just, reasonable, and Charitable, but absolutely necessary in a Trading Nation, like this, as I shall shew at large in its order. 1. It is just, because no Right is given away, but where it is supposed to be actually lost before, and that Supposition is made reasonable too, because it obliges the Debtor, if all is not gone before, to give up all that is left, before he can be discharged. 2. It is necessary, because, in a Nation of Trade, *as I say above*, where the Creditor is legally empowered to Imprison the Debtor *for the smallest Debt*, the Number of such Prisoners, *especially the Nations present declining Circumstances in Trade, considered*, would be so great, as to become a National Grievance. 3. The Nature of the Thing implies it; for, tho' *it is True*, and it is reasonable it should be so, *that* a Debtor ought to be Imprisoned, in order to oblige him to pay his Debts; yet, when that Payment becomes really impossible, the end of Imprisonment is answered; for Imprisonment for Debt, is not *as a Punishment* to the Debtor, but as the propereſt Method to make him Honest, when then, he is, *bona fide*, uncapable, he ought not to be detain'd; for that turns his being a Debtor into his being a Criminal, and makes his Accuser be his Judge: ——Like the old Practice, of selling the Debtor to Slavery, for Payment of his Debt, with this difference; that *when he was sold*, yet, if the Debt was paid, he became Free at a certain time: ——But, this is a Digression here, and requires to be spoken of more largely.

2. This Act has shewn the Nation the absolute Necessity there is, of ONCE *in many Years*, considering of a *Goal Jubilee*, for Prisoners whose only Crime is, that their Weights are heavier than other Mens, and who have now, for many Years, been rejected, for those Reasons only, which should have mov'd in their Favour, *viz. Because their Miseries are great*; These are the only miserable ones that ever I heard of, the Greatness of whose Miseries, is the Reason of their Continuance: When you see an Object of Compassion extending his Arms to you for Charity, if you are moved, it is this stirs your

Affections,

Affections, *That Poor Creature*, say you, *is really an Object of Charity*: as to others, whose Afflictions are not so great, *you let them go.* ——When *Job*'s three Friends came to Comfort him, the Greatness of his Sorrow struck them with astonishment, and threw them into *that known Extreme of Compassionate Grief*, I mean, SILENCE. ——Now, in the Case before us, the contrary Rule has been observed, and you have *stop'd your Ears* against those real moving Objects of National Compassion, whose Families feel all the several Extremes of Distress, and who are really less able to support themselves, than others, not having been bred to Arts and Mechanick Labour, and have opened your Ears to the noisy clamouring Crowd of smaller Debtors, meerly because it was LOUD, and their Number *many*. This, I think, may pass among one of our National Mistakes, of which, may justly be said, *These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

But, I return to our Modern Encreases of Trade. As we have an Encrease of Bankrupts in Trade, so we have an Encrease of those Employments which serve to Bankrupt our whole Trade: ——And this Head would run me out a great length, if I had room to extend the Discourse,

1. The Loans of Money to the Publick, upon large Interests and Advantages, have been Ruinous to Trade, by drawing out vast Sums from the General Stock in Trade; whereby, as there has been an encrease of Loans and Funds, so there has been a Decay of Personal and Paper Credit, an excessive want of ready Money in Trade, and a lessening Trade it self, in proportion.
2. An encrease of Extortion in Borrowing and Lending; this has been very much occasioned by the excessive high Duties to be paid upon most of the Branches of Trade, to advance which, the Importers have been sent to the Usurers and Bankers, to discount their Bills and Securities, and, perhaps, pledge their Cellars and Warehouses; and these Discounts have been so severe, by the Avarice and abominable Extortion of those who have made it their Business, to keep Money by them for that purpose; that going to a certain place, or Person, whose Voracious Appetite was never satiate, but by the Grave, was called, too justly, going to the Devil.
3. An encrease of Burthens and Difficulties, upon almost every Branch of Trade, occasioned by t innumerable Imposts, Duties, and addition Demands upon Imported Goods, almost from Parts; this has not only required the Mercha to have more Stock, to carry on less Trade th usual, and ruin'd personal Credit, by disabli them to trust the Wholesale Dealers, but has r them into that fatal Method, *Fatal to Trade self, as well as to the Merchant*, of giving Bon at the Custom-House, and bringing Men to Bound one for another, by which so many fl rishing Merchants have been ruin'd, so ma Cruelties in the Management of Extents, ex cised on the Merchants, and by which our P sons are now filled, with, not a few, as Go Merchants as any that have walk'd the *Exchan*

To these Encreases I might add,

The encrease of *Stock-Jobbing*, a Meteor or Com in Trade, which blazes and shines as Comets do, the likeness of Stars, *but last for a short time on* and then expire and go out, filling the Air wi noxious Fumes, from infectious Exhalations, whi many times, produce those Plagues that we fa they portend: ——So this *Ignis Fatuus*, or Mete in Trade, has made a large Blaze, but is a Pla upon our Trade, and must, at last, expire with t Funds that created it.

The Encrease of such Trades as depend upon M dern Luxury, and owe their late Rise to the Inv tion of this immediate Age, who, at the same ti that their Poverty encreases visibly, are encreasi their Expenses; of this I shall speak in my next.

The Encrease of Retailers in Trade; the Encre of Pedlars and travelling Chapmen, and the E crease of all those who help to destroy the Circula on of our Home Trade: This, also, is a large Fie and requires to be spoken of by it self.

The Encrease of Beggars, and Vagabond Po an undoubted Testimony both of the Decay of Trad and of a Decay of the just Measures taken, or whi may be taken, to regulate and imploy our Poor.

An Encrease of Vice, Prophaneness, Immorali and Publick Debauchery, a visible Sign of the Dec of Religion, and not that only, but a Decay of t usual Publick Endeavours to Reform, and to R strain us.

Lastly, An Encrease of Hatred, Wrath, Stri and all Uncharitableness, of which I shall say no mo *because it has a Tendency to Parties, which I resolve to meddle with in this Part*, than only this;—— they do on a House infected with the Plague, a shut up; *Lord have Mercy!* +

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